Appendix 10:

Home Visitation Tips and Resources

MAKING SAFE AND EFFECTIVE HOME VISITS

Self-Care: Practical Tips Before You Go
- Keep dress simple - avoid jewelry, scarves, clothing that will attract unwanted attention.
- Wear safe footwear with closed toes.
- Take hand sanitizer.
- Avoid wearing scents as some people are sensitive.

Think Safety Before You Go
- Assess risks by phone before the visit (e.g., animals, other persons in home).
- Ask clients to secure unruly pets.
- Ask clients to turn on lights, meet you at the door.
- If visit presents significant safety hazards, consider an alternative site to meet and/or take a buddy.
- Be sure you have enough gas and a spare tire.
- Program the client’s number into your phone.
- Identify safe routes within the neighborhood.
- Wear a name tag.
- Plan what you want to take into the home. Have items like laptops or backpacks locked away out of sight before arriving at your destination.
- Consider carrying clipboard, pepper spray, or a whistle.
- Carry important phone numbers with you.

Home Visit Best Practices: Using the Elevate AIDET Principle
- Acknowledge all family members. Knock, smile, make eye contact, and be pleasant.
- Introduce yourself and your role.
- Duration. At the start, state how long the overall visit will take, and during the visit you may want to state the length of particular tasks.
- Explain all processes and procedures so they know what to expect.
- Thank the family for inviting you into their home and for their time. Ask if there are any other questions before ending.

Establishing Rapport
Show respect by using titles (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Ms.), be aware of potential cultural differences, and be sure to use people-first language and practice disability etiquette.

Boundaries and Roles
- Maintain a professional relationship. Becoming “friends” may make it difficult to talk about hard topics.
- Respect personal space. Do not initiate touch unless necessary for the intervention. If touch is necessary, ask permission.
- Use self-disclosure sparingly to communicate understanding/build trust. The focus is not on you.
- Maintain confidentiality. While OK to discuss cases with supervisor as needed, do not share specifics or identifying information with your friends or family.

Safety During the Home Visit
- Do not park in someone’s assigned space, or block access to other cars.
- Keep hands free and car keys in hand.
- Walk with confidence.
- Do not walk through groups on street/sidewalk.
- Plan safe physical proximity in the home by positioning yourself between the client and the door. Sit near an exit or facing hallway to view other rooms. Sit on a hard chair or the edge of a soft chair to be able to get up quickly.

If There Are Safety Concerns
If a family member becomes agitated or says things that make you uncomfortable:

- Respond calmly, using “I” statements.
- Acknowledge what they are saying.
- Redirect using matter of fact, simple, direct statements.
- Keep a physical distance of at least 3 feet.
- Do not reach out to touch the person, stand in front of the person, or turn your back to the person.
- Do not get up from a chair while the person is sitting.
- Do not try to leave too abruptly.
- Trust your instincts regarding impending danger.
- Do not reveal information about yourself or your family that could increase the risk of being harmed.
- If you feel threatened, remain calm but leave as quickly as possible.
- Report any incident to your supervisor.

**Recognizing and Responding to Health and Home Safety Issues**

Establish procedures for how to report home safety issues. Examples of health/safety issues are:

- Neglect - unmet medical, dental, personal hygiene, or nutrition needs.
- Unsafe living conditions or injuries.
- Possible abuse – physical, sexual.
- Emotional abuse – name calling, making fun, putting the person down.
- Mental status – depression, anxiety, sleep deprivation.
- Financial abuse – taking money, not allowing the person to get or keep a job when one is desired.
- Caregivers - memory problems, confusion, inappropriate behaviors. Inappropriate behaviors of paid staff.

After you leave, be sure to make notes about any concerning observations or statements.

**Web Resources**

*The “Home Ranger” Rides Again: Making Home Visits Safer and More Effective*  [http://hpp.sagepub.com/content/9/4/323.full.pdf](http://hpp.sagepub.com/content/9/4/323.full.pdf)